Criteria for grant of DA to the Central Government Employees

*432. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANACE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the criteria fixed by Government for grant of dearness allowance to the Central Government employees;

(b) what are the recommendations of the Pay Commission regarding the grant of dearness allowance to Central Government employees in every January and July of the year and whether these recommendations have been accepted by Government; and

(c) whether the dearness allowance sanctioned from time to time and particularly w.e.f. 1.1.2000 is in accordance with the criteria fixed by Government; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL) (a) and (b) The All India Consumer Price Index (Industrial Workers) (AICPI) (IW) Series with 1982 as the base year is used for calculating Dearness Allowance payable to Central Government employees. Dearness Allowance is a compensatory payment. Compensation is paid for the percentage increase above the twelve monthly average of AICPI of 306.33 obtaining on 1.1.1996. Compensation is sanctioned twice a year with effect from 1st January and 1st July payable with the salary for March and for September respectively. These criteria are as per the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission which have been accepted by the Central Government.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Comprehensive programme for development of tourism

*433. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any comprehensive programme to develop the tourism sector in the country during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The annual plan 2000-2001 for Ministry of Tourism consists of schemes for development of Tourist Infrastructure, Human Resources, Tourist Information and Publicity, Information Technology/ Market Research etc. A Plan provision of Rs. 135.00 Crores has been made during the current financial year for the above schemes. A provision of 10% of the total plan outlay has been made for the projects/ schemes in the North Eastern Region and Sikkim.

Restoration of concessions to the computer industry

*434. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some of the concessions to the computer industry announced in (he budget this year have been offset to some extent by the EXIM Policy announced recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that prices of PCs would not come down as expected; and

(d) if so, whether it is proposed to restore these concessions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR) (a) and (b) No Sir, while the Budget has reduced import duties on several items related to computer industry, there has been no change in the importability of these items in the EXIM policy announced recently and they continue to be freely importable as before. Thus there is no adverse impact on account of EXIM policy changes on the duty concessions announced in the Budget for the computer industry.

(c) The prices of PCs largely depend on their configuartion and market forces. Reduction in duty rates is only one among the several factors affecting the prices of computers. The general trend has been a reduction in prices of PCs; or for the same price, there is upgradation in terms of configuration.

(d) Does not arise in view of the replies to parts (a), (b) and (c) above.